



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

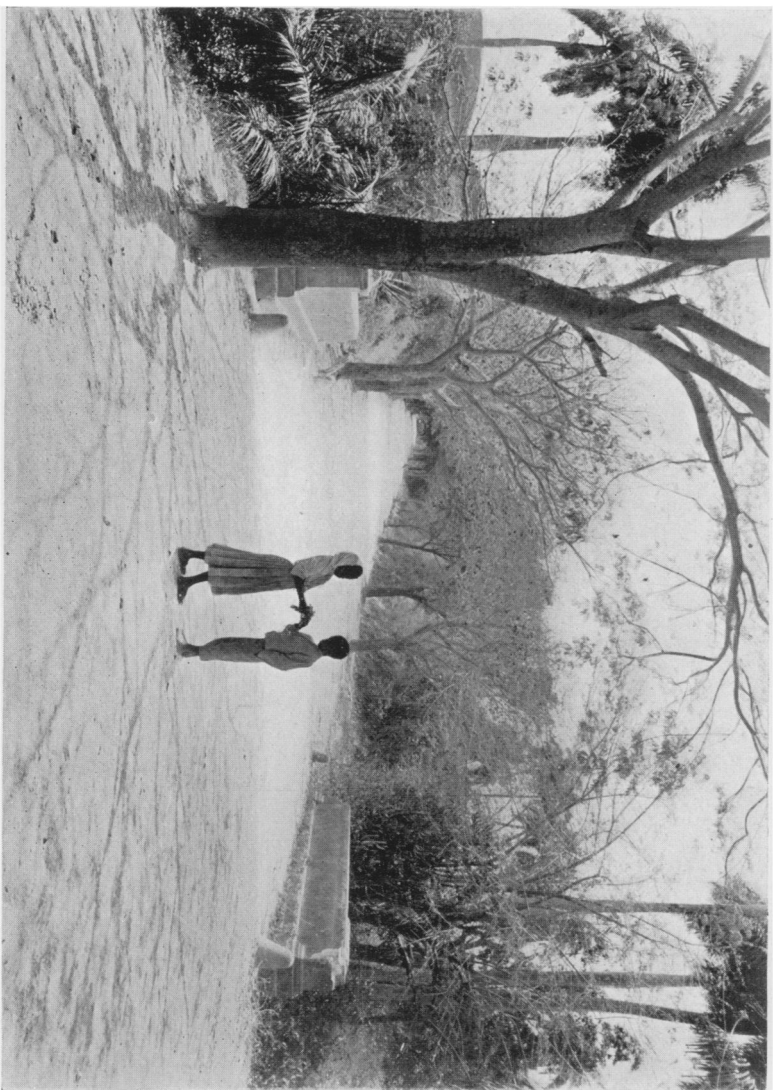
CUBA: A SKETCH

By M. EUGÉNIE HIBBARD

“IN the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of the endangered American interests, which give us the right and duty to speak and act, *the war in Cuba must stop.*” In these words President McKinley outlined the necessity for intervention on the Island of Cuba in his message to Congress of April 11, 1898; and the joint resolution of Congress of April 20, 1898, authorizing the President to expel the Spanish forces from Cuba declared “that the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and the control of the island to the people.”

In the incredibly short space of four years all this had been accomplished. The Spanish forces had been withdrawn, the Republic of Cuba was established, and the island was handed over May 20, 1902, to the “government and control” of its own people. The history of nations will relate that when the flag of the new republic asserted itself, it rose from the troubled waters of distress, sickness, and oppression, and was unfurled in the clear, pure atmosphere of health, peace, and freedom, the visible sign of the redemption of a promise made by a nation in a war for humanity, not conquest. Results have proved so satisfactory (so far) that it is difficult to appreciate or realize the amount of work that was absolutely necessary to arrange preliminaries, to establish a form of government suitable for a people who for more than four centuries had been governed by oppression. Laws existed, adequate in the main, but never fairly or honestly administered; treatment was arbitrary and cruel, respecting neither life nor property; strict measures had to be enforced to check the demoralizing effect of ninety years spent in a struggle for independence, and means applied to relieve the conditions resulting—viz., starvation and disease.

This task was a difficult one, apart from the fact that the majority of the people were of the Latin race, with speech, customs, prejudices, and traditions unlike our own. Intensely suspicious, with the suspicion born of oppression and unfilled promises, creating but little faith in the great principles of government essential to the rule of law and maintenance of personal freedom, which now became obligatory for the United States to establish, and in so doing it was necessary to adopt such measures as would conform to existing conditions and even the prejudices of the people.



STREET IN HAVANA, LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF TROPICAL CUBA

On December 13, 1898, the Division of Cuba was established, with headquarters at Havana. The division was placed under the control of Major-General John R. Brooke, and on January 1, 1899, the sovereignty of Spain was relinquished and the evacuation began, which was completed February 6, 1899, when the last of the Spanish army sailed away from the port of Cienfuegos (one hundred fires).

The bitter feeling that existed between the Spaniards who were left on the island and the Cubans was very apparent, but the removal of Spanish control and substitution of American rule was effected without disorder.

“The world-famous island of Cuba” lies about one hundred and thirty miles south of the United States off the coast of Florida; geographically speaking, she is a very near neighbor. It is the largest of the group of West Indian islands, and is also known as the Queen, Gem, or Pearl of the Antilles. It is in the Torrid Zone, shaped somewhat like a cornucopia, about seven hundred and fifty miles long, nearly the size of the State of Pennsylvania. The population of the island compares with that of the city of Chicago. It was discovered by Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) in 1494, the Genoese navigator, who, under the auspices of Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain, made his first wonderful voyage of discovery in 1492, and claims to be his burial place, though the adjacent island of Santo Domingo, named after Bartholomew, brother of Columbus, avows that its most ancient cathedral, built in the early part of 1500, was the first receptacle of the ashes of the great navigator, who died May 26, 1506. The remains are alleged to have been transferred to Havana, Cuba, in 1795, and more recently from Havana to Spain.

In the city of Havana, facing the Governor’s palace, now the residence of the Chief Executive (President Palma), is a small chapel, built of white marble, surrounded by a high iron railing and partially shaded by trees, erected on the spot where, tradition avers, Columbus on landing offered a mass of thanksgiving. This chapel is open to the public one day only during the year, the day being *Viernes Santo* (Good Friday).

Many tribes of peaceful Indians were found on the island by the early explorers, numbering in all perhaps a million people. In the city of Havana may still be found the remains of an old stone wall with enclosures, which is said to have at one time surrounded the city, and was built as a fortification against the Indians. During the first century of Spanish rule these people disappeared, the people in whose conversion Queen Isabel was so interested; others who were imported lived and died only in slavery. Near the town of Matanzas is a beautiful and

fertile valley known as the Yumuri Valley (a corruption of the Spanish *Yo Mori, I die*), so named by the early settlers, it being the place of refuge of the Indians in that section of the country, who, when requested by the Spaniards to leave the valley, gave the short and decisive reply, "We die first." The Yumuri River, the valley itself, and the hills surrounding it, from which an extensive view is obtained, is one of the spots in Cuba to be ever remembered for its natural beauty and tradition..

Following the disappearance of the Indian the importation of negroes from the West Coast of Africa began. The state of slavery continued for many years. The emancipation of slaves was finally secured and the treaty signed by Spain and England in 1835.

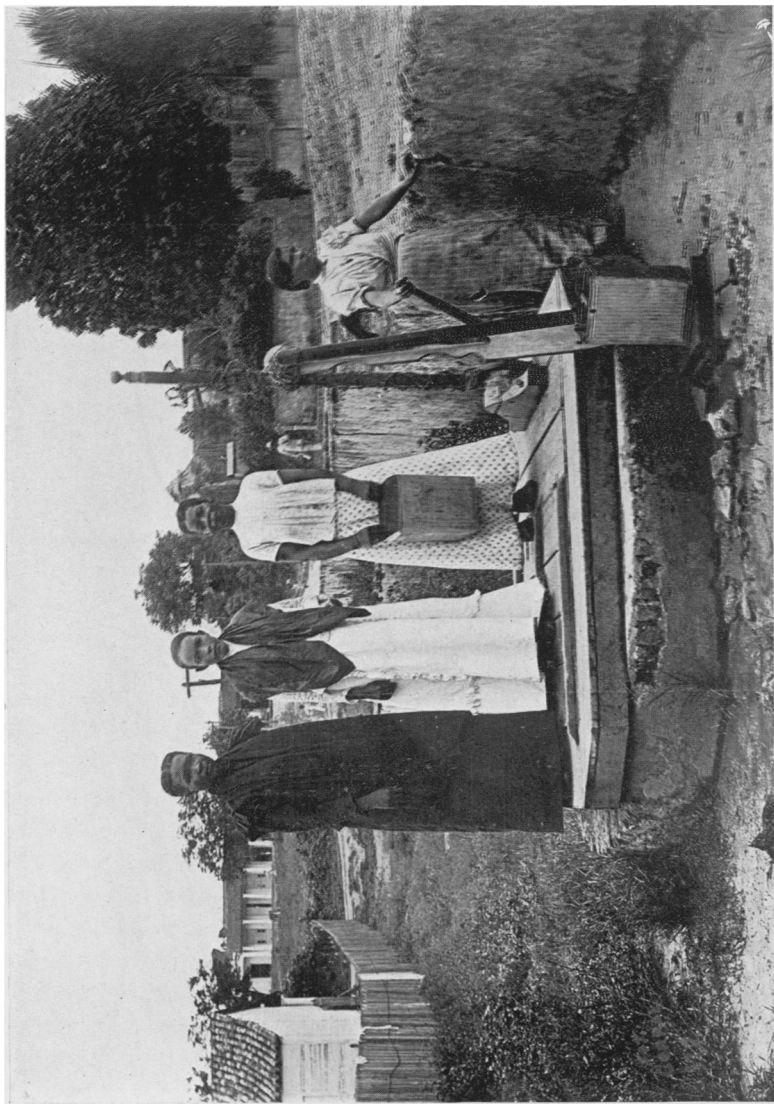
The population in 1898 was composed of Spaniards and Cubans, who constituted the white race, the Africans, who formed fully one-third of the population, and the Chinese coolies and laborers from the West Indies, who formed the mixed races. The Africans identified themselves with the Cubans in the war for independence and were a strong factor in the persistence of the struggle.

The Spaniard, *señor*, *don*, or *grandee*, appears as a most imposing person. He was the representative or lieutenant of Madrid, Spain, as none but native-born Spaniards were eligible for office, endowed with extraordinary powers, intent only on the plunder of office, or he was a man of a commercial turn of mind, residing long enough on the island to amass a fortune—an average term of three years accomplishing the purpose—sufficient to repair some ancient alcazar or castle in Spain, or to purchase some desirable estate where he in turn might live a life of imposing grandeur. Being prompted by these motives, or fulfilling his mission of supremacy, he was naturally devoid of sympathy or fine sentiments, a man of adventurous disposition (who with qualifying attributes might be admired), audacious, and tyrannical, dominated by the idea that Spain held the military, religious, and commercial control, and that Cuba was legitimate prey.

The dungeons of the Morro Castles, the dead line at Cubaña, the students' monument in the Cristobal Colon Cemetery, are standing though voiceless monuments of cruelties practised within the memory of the present generation. The childless widows and orphans are the living witnesses. The exception is found in the Spaniards who have elected to remain and share the destiny of the new republic by becoming citizens, men whose characters and business abilities will prove a large factor in raising from the ashes a substantial and we hope an enduring testimony of gratitude to Liberty. The well-known courtesy and unexcelled hospitality of the Spaniard characterizes the *señor* in Cuba as in Spain.



THE YUMURI RIVER NEAR MATANZAS



GROUP OF NATIVES AT WELL, PINAR DEL RIOS, CUBA

The Cuban, the descendant of the Spaniard, who for generations had lived under the despotic and arbitrary rule exercised over a people in a state of rebellion, imbibed from earliest childhood a spirit of opposition to controlling influences and a detestation of authority. As reasons continually presented themselves for resenting the oppressors' rule, he too counted his life honorably sacrificed if forfeited in fighting for the liberation of his country, "for none hated Spanish rule more intensely than those of Spanish blood born on Cuban soil." The Cuban now forms the largest part of the white population. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba "Africans who may have been slaves in Cuba and those who were emancipated and comprised in Article 13 of the treaty of June 28, 1835, entered into by Spain and England," are entitled to become citizens and compose a large part of the Cuban people of to-day.

The Chinese coolie was and is the market gardener, the fruit-vender, cook, and even housemaid of the people; his labor from preference is that of gardener, and he remains an alien. At the close of the war, greatly to the benefit of all concerned, strangely enough, a steady stream of immigration set in from the North of Spain, composed of the hardy working classes from the agricultural districts, who do not look upon work as a humiliation, of most frugal habits and saving propensities, industrious, patient, and willing, the element so desirable and absolutely necessary where the native population was demoralized by years of industrial inactivity, the uncertainty of the future, and the enervation of mind and body the result of starvation and disease.

Early in the year 1899 the civil government was divided into four departments, those of "State and Government," "Finance," "Justice and Public Instruction," and "Agriculture, Commerce, Industries, and Public Works." These were later increased to six, one of which was the Department of Charities.

The first duty of the Government was the immediate relief of distress, the sanitation of the towns, and the revival of industry. Through the agency of the officers of the army (without reference to the large amount of relief distributed by the Red Cross Society) food was issued at a total cost of one million five hundred thousand dollars. In the two provinces of Matanzas and Santa Clara thirty-six thousand widows and fifty-eight thousand orphans were fed, sheltered, and clothed, medicines were supplied, and the sick attended to. The cities and towns were crowded with refugees and reconcentrados.* The latter were the natives living in the country and in isolated districts, non-combatants who were ordered to the towns and cities and escorted there by the

* A feature of this war enforced by General Weyler.

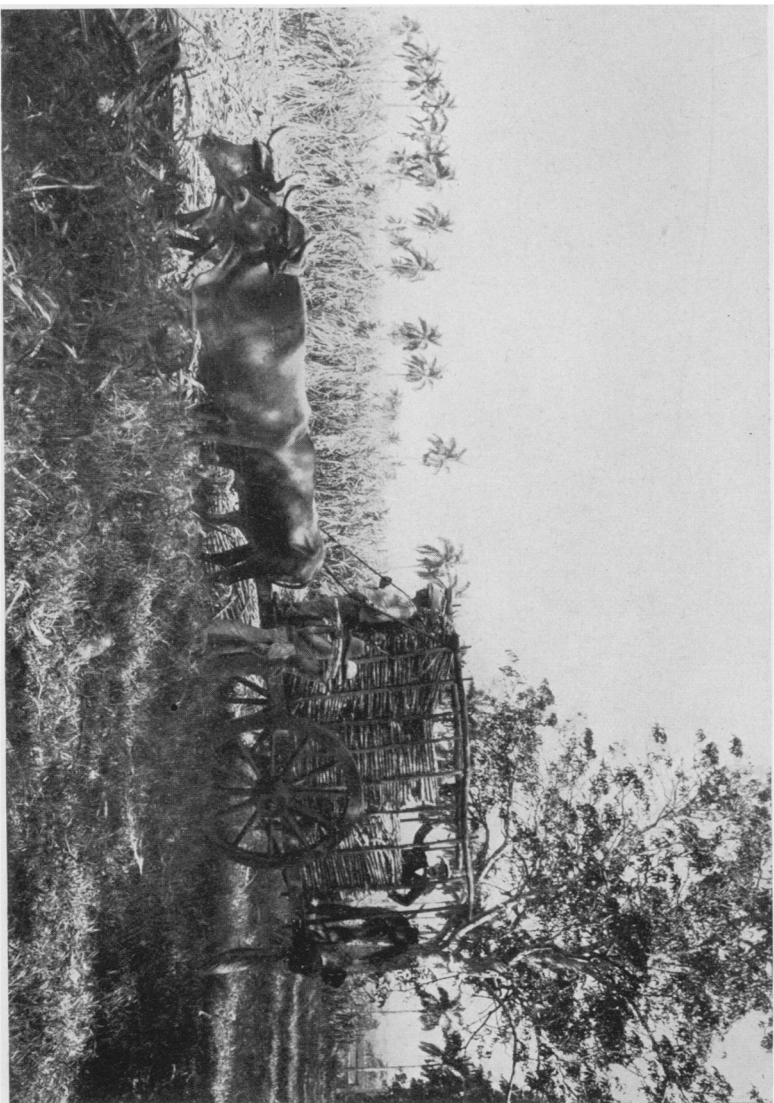
Spanish troops at the point of the bayonet, ostensibly to secure the safety of the women and children and to prevent the harboring of a hostile element. The tales of sadness, re-told many months later, showed but little lessening of the feeling of exasperation caused by the separation, subsequent starvation, and death of families and friends and by the forced abandonment of homes and farms, which had been ruthlessly laid waste. The capacity of the cities was overcharged, and destitutes in a most deplorable state of abjectness were found huddled together in huts, hovels, and underground vaults, the living with the dead, striving to secure protection from the elements, too weak to emerge to seek the food nature demanded. It has been estimated that over four hundred thousand reconcentrados died of starvation before the United States interposed. Havana suffered more than the other cities in Cuba, as it was the principal one. One of its finest streets is now built over a portion of the town on the site of one of the worst catacomb-like places of concealment.

The sanitary—or rather unsanitary—condition of the towns is difficult to conceive. The streets had been the receptacles for all the refuse, garbage, and other filth, it is said, for centuries. In some places it was necessary to dig down several feet to reach the original paving. The modern methods of sanitation were unknown, cesspools long neglected existed, the water supply was inefficient and in many places was the sources of much of the sickness that prevailed, and the air was contaminated by the foul odors arising from the decomposing material lying exposed to the sun and the rain. The birds of carrion, the scavengers of the island, were numerous, and filled the air with the sound of their harsh, repulsive croak. It was interesting to watch the rapid decrease in their number as the country was being rid of the material on which they existed.

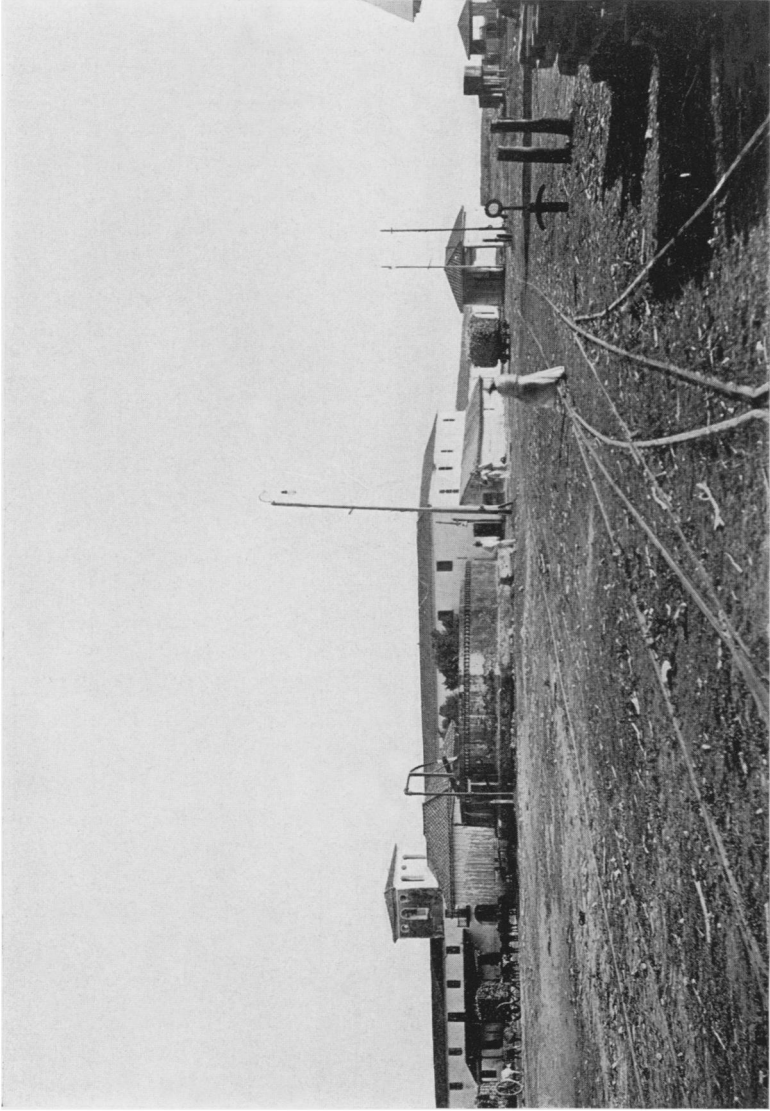
The Queen, the Gem, the Pearl of the Antilles, whose shores were laved on every side by the beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean Sea, seemed to implore the cleansing influence of the tide, but which in answer appeared only to mock by creeping its few allotted inches inshore. The tide does not rise more than a foot. The sound of the surf is only heard when the wind is high.

Many deaths occurred during the first few months of 1899, owing to the great number of sick and dying remaining at the time of the Spanish evacuation. "The rate steadily decreased, until in September it was brought down to the annual rate of twenty-seven per thousand, and in October to 26.6 per thousand."

Yellow fever, the scourge of the island, which caused it to be a menace to our southern ports during a greater part of the year,



GATHERING SUGAR-CANE WITH OX-TEAM, CUBA



PRESS AND MILL ON SUGAR PLANTATION

attacking principally those of foreign birth resident but a short time on the island (a peculiar feature is that the natives are immune), was decreasing. The number of deaths from this disease in Havana for the first ten months of the year 1899 was sixty-three, compared to one hundred and thirty-four in 1898.

The industry of Cuba, which is mainly agricultural, had been so long neglected that in order to revive it it was necessary, in restoring the homes and property that had been wilfully destroyed by the Spanish troops,—though it has been asserted that the Cuban attached to his home would from sheer emotion destroy all semblance of comfort or prosperity before leaving it rather than have it fall into the hands of the enemy,—to furnish equipment and to restock the farms. Oxen were purchased, the slow, deliberate movements of the creatures suiting well the requirements for ploughing and heavy hauling purposes, seeds were supplied, and agricultural implements provided.

The sugar plantations were heavily mortgaged, which affected the owners of the large estates, and under the rather uncertain conditions made loans hazardous; thus crippled, the employment of the native, who depended upon the work on the plantations and in the sugar mills for his daily wage, was precarious.

The conduct of the Cubans during the first year of deliverance has been cited as “admirable.” The agitators, who are always in evidence, criticised the action of the United States in assuming control of the country. The official report, however, states, “The substantial body of educated Cubans have shown themselves to be patriotic, appreciative, and helpful, while the great body of uneducated Cubans have been patient and law-abiding.”

In 1900 Brigadier-General Leonard Wood (now Major-General), the commander of the Department of Santiago until December, 1899, became Military Governor of the island.

The census completed this year showed a total population of one million five hundred and seventy-two thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, of whom thirty-four per cent. could read and write, sixty-six per cent. being illiterate. More than half the population consisted of native-born whites.

The standard of education in the schools had never risen above the primitive method of learning by rote, the principal text-book being the catechism, and the girls were taught embroidery. Scholars attended the homes of the teachers, as there were no separate school-houses, and the necessary accessories in the line of maps, black-boards, or other facilities were lacking. The attendance was governed by the ability of the parents of the pupils to contribute a fee; the children of the very poor were

therefore neglected, and during the war the schools were practically closed.

The daughters of the wealthy families attended the convents or were educated abroad, and the sons who intended following a profession or commercial life were educated, according to choice, at Madrid, Paris, Barcelona, or in the United States. These men retained through several years' residence abroad true patriotic instincts, which finally, thus disseminated, attracted the attention of the world in their prolonged endeavors to liberate their country from the oppressors' rule.

Regarding education, steps were immediately taken to remedy the state of affairs, the question being one of general interest. With the assistance of Mr. Alexis Frye, a system of education was inaugurated under the Cuban Secretary of Public Instruction and the Commissioner of Public Schools, American text-books were translated into Spanish, kindergartens were established, Spanish cuartels (barracks), after being thoroughly cleansed and renovated, were utilized as school buildings. A fund provided through the generosity of Harvard University and its friends enabled over one thousand Cuban teachers to attend the summer school at Cambridge, Mass., the United States Government placing five transports at their service to convey them from and back to Cuba.

Investigation of the public institutions proved them to be in a most dilapidated and squalid condition. The prisons were found filled to overflowing, "the wretched creatures living in indescribable filth and squalor." The women slept on the floor, and at the time of the official visit were unable to appear in a body, as only one garment was provided, which had to be passed from one to another. Many of those poor creatures had been confined for eleven years, and in some cases without having been convicted of any offence and ignorant of having committed any misdemeanor. On the recommendation of the board five hundred and twenty prisoners were released and action taken to inaugurate a system savoring of civilization. The changes instituted in the courts, etc., soon resulted in many of the prisons being unoccupied. In Matanzas the Cárcel (prison) was metamorphosed and became a high school, with beautiful and commodious rooms, some of which were used as a kindergarten. A radical change was thus effected.

(To be continued.)

